



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# News Release

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*Washington, D.C.* -- The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) New York/New Jersey Veterans Integrated Service Network Consortium on Homeless Veterans has received the Public Employees Roundtable (PER) 1998 Public Service Excellence Award in the Federal category.

The Consortium for Homeless Veterans was recognized for excellence in providing through innovative, cost-effective service partnerships between VA and the New York metropolitan area community a seamless continuum of care for homeless veterans. It has become a national model for the planning, coordination, and integration of such programs.

"VA has made a commitment to excellence in every aspect of health care. Helping homeless veterans is one of our highest priorities. We're proud of the consortium and the recognition it has received," said Kenneth W. Kizer, M.D., VA Under Secretary for Health.

Representatives of the consortium received their award May 4 in the Dirksen Senate Office Building Auditorium in Washington, D.C.

The award pays tribute to the highest standards of excellence and innovation in federal, state and local government. By recognizing groups rather than individuals, the award demonstrates the importance of teamwork in public service.

"We look for public employees who are going beyond the call of duty, for programs which can serve as role models for other government agencies," explained PER Awards Committee Chairman Joe Mass.

VA estimates that there may be as many as 12,000 homeless veterans in New York City, about one-third of the total number of homeless adults. During fiscal year 1997, outreach efforts by the consortium reached 3,194 veterans who might not otherwise have sought treatment at VA.

Nearly 1,000 veterans were placed in either permanent or VA-supported housing, and 512 veterans were housed in VA domiciliaries. Of the domiciliary residents, 62.2 percent of domiciliary residents were housed when discharged from the program, and 64 percent were employed when discharged.

Nationwide, VA estimates that some 250,000 homeless persons, or about one-third of the adult homeless population living on the streets or in shelters on any given night, have served their country in the armed services. VA's major homeless programs constitute the largest integrated network of homeless assistance programs in the country, offering a wide array of services and initiatives to help veterans recover from homelessness and live as self-sufficiently and independently as possible.

VA directed more than \$92 million to specialized homeless assistance programs in fiscal year 1997, including grants and per diem payments to 23 public and non-profit groups to assist homeless veterans in 15 states and the District of Columbia. VA plans to spend more than \$96 million on its specialized homeless assistance programs in fiscal year 1998.

PER is a non-profit, non-partisan coalition of 38 management and professional associations representing more than one million public employees and retirees. Its mission is to educate the public about ways public

employees contribute to the quality of life in America, to enhance excellence and esprit de corps in the public sector, and to encourage interest in public careers.